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Notes on the Answers, 5 October 1960, to Questions Asked
[REDACTED] Chief of Operations

1. To predict what will be the trend in CIA operations in the next 10 to 15 years is impossible, [REDACTED] Chief of Operations, DD(P), told the Clandestine Services Review on 5 October 1960. He said he did not even know what the trend would be next month. Under modern world conditions, the Agency has been operating like a volunteer fire department. There is no clue to what the future holds. How could anyone predict? 25X1A9a

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2. [REDACTED] was answering selected questions from a list of 28 submitted to him by the class. Members had prepared the questions on 3 October. The questions had been screened, arranged, and delivered to [REDACTED] on 4 October. 25X1A9a

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3. One of the most perplexing problems facing CIA is that of cover, [REDACTED] said. It does not much matter whether the need for cover is in Washington [REDACTED] or in the field as the non-official kind. Under any circumstances, the problem is not easy to resolve. Arrangements for cover back-stops in Washington are needed and to some extent have been arranged. The Agency would be delighted to have your ideas; this is a tough problem. Over the years, committees of important men have mulled it over. In the meantime, pending a solution your cover in Washington is your own. Agency personnel, too, is getting vulnerable in [REDACTED] cover. Much is being done on non-official cover. Success here will depend on what the divisions put behind the effort. Because of the work required, the divisions do not much like establishing unofficial cover although it is essential to operations. Relatively, [REDACTED] cover is so much easier to set up. The non-official-cover program is far from what it should be. To insure success, responsible officers must have their hearts in the development of the program. 25X1C4a 25X1C4a

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4. In answer to a question from the floor, [REDACTED] said that business administrators had been sent into the field to organize businesses that would make money. They had been followed by operators. It had been found easier, however, to use large companies already in being. Getting under way a viable, profitable business is hard; generally the Agency ends up 25X1A9a

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subsidizing an unprofitable one. There is also the job of fitting an officer into a slot. Opportunities for successful

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over. There is no substitute for knowing what you are doing. The American has particular difficulty in adjusting himself to what the Clandestine Services are doing. For one thing, Americans are a nation of talkers, compulsive talkers. There are few secrets in the Government. It takes rewiring to adapt Americans to clandestine activities. Unless the American is able to adjust to what to him are new disciplines, the Clandestine Services find themselves with a strange guy in hand.

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5. [REDACTED] thanked a questioner for bringing to a head the matter of speakers quoting Mr. Bissell. The student had asked [REDACTED] to give a synopsis of Mr. Bissell's philosophy of the Clandestine Services. It is high time to cork off on others speaking for the boss, said [REDACTED]. Each speaker should be authoritative in his own right. Students are entitled to the facts. Quoting the boss leads to confusion. So far as the philosophy of the Clandestine Services is concerned, they are attempting to get on with the mission they have been given to do. From time to time, emphasis changes. The Clandestine Services go in phases, and so does life. That does not mean a change in fundamental position. It is a matter often of trying to sort out the important job and deciding whom to cut off when overloaded. The difficulty to establish prime targets in the USSR, for instance, is beyond expression. It is even harder to get down to 10 installations and then to stay put for any length of time. This can be said, but it is impossible for anybody except Mr. Bissell himself to give a synopsis of his philosophy.

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6. Whether an atmosphere of flatness and bureaucracy has settled over Headquarters, [REDACTED] said, was hard to know from the Washington point of view. He suggested that returnees churn up Headquarters people a bit and keep the place alive.

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7. The Agency is not, and has not been, lacking for money, was [REDACTED] answer to how Congressional pressure for economy would affect CIA in cutting operations or preventing needed expansion, and in freezing personnel. The Agency has enough money to do all the things it is able to do. Any cutting done has been in allocating money to matters considered to be important. Reducing personnel has been concerned with keeping the Agency lean and healthy as much as with money.

8. The prospects for more penetration of CIA operations by the Bureau of the Budget are excellent, said [REDACTED]. What has happened is simple. At the start, CIA was sacrosanct. After some time, though, the bureau established a bridgehead. Then it wanted to know more and more about how sensibly money is being spent by the Agency. Telling the Bureau of the Budget to stop is the only way to end its penetration. The President is the authority that can call off the Director of the Budget. To approach the President on such a subject would be ticklish and possible only to the Director of CIA.

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9. Not a bad job has been done on stressing the unusual aspects of CIA as against merely conforming with standard procedures of old-line agencies, [REDACTED] said. It does not behoove CIA to become unique. Too often other agencies look upon it as a spoiled group. In being unique, it would become a real target. As things are now, you can have a real go at getting a real job done. You are not hampered by too much standardization of procedure. The Berlin tunnel, kept secret for 11 months and 11 days, was unique and successful. So was flying aircraft over the USSR for some years.

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10. To a question about the hope of middle-level personnel for promotion in light of the apparent glut of higher level personnel, [REDACTED] replied that he enjoyed being part of a "glut." But middle-levelers can still get ahead. As a panel member, he had seen promoted a GS-14 the other day. The chances for such promotions, however, are not so good as they were.

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11. A case officer can be promoted to a higher grade, to GS-15 for instance, without his being in a supervisory slot. No discrimination is involved here. [REDACTED] said he could not understand why this bogeyman had not been laid long ago. It is possible for a case officer even to get into the supergrades with supervision over nobody but himself. The need is to be an unusually good case officer. Of course, the Agency must have supervisors, too. In all senses, the Agency should permit working to the top.

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12. Learning language is a good idea; it never hurt anyone, [REDACTED] X1A9a said in answering a question as to whether there was value in sodoing for operations officers. There is no doubt about the desirability of learning. The fact that it is obviously impossible for all chiefs of station to know all languages of areas to which they are posted does not alter the desirability of learning native languages. The amount of money the Agency spends on encouraging language proficiency shows the official attitude. But there are problems in language training, especially in time expenditures. For instance can an operations officer afford to learn [REDACTED], spend four years where he can use it, then start over in learning [REDACTED] because he is being sent to [REDACTED]. Since the Army and the Air Force are in a peacetime status, they can afford time and people for maximum language training. These services assign individuals to a year's appropriate language training before sending them into the field. CIA is fighting its war now; it has not enough time for so much training.

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13. In the matter of the advisability of an operations officer becoming a specialist or a generalist, [REDACTED] said that the Agency could adapt itself to both and that he hoped it would always have both. Which he wants to become the officer himself, in consultation with others, must determine. The Agency needs people of all kinds, and particular situations require special tailoring. Philosophically it makes no difference in becoming specialist or generalist.

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14. Suddenly an aura has developed about advanced intelligence collection systems, [REDACTED] said in answering a question about their impact on the future of the case officer and his agent. Pictures from heights, for instance, have always been taken. As long as there has been an aeroplane, pictures have been taken from it. CIA needs to use every collection device it can. If you have six arrows to your bow, there is nothing wrong with adding number seven and eight. But the addition does not necessitate throwing away the first six. In the

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final analysis, too, the only way you can get at what a man thinks is to talk with him. In this respect, the agent and his case officer have been doing pretty well for a long time. An excellent reporting job now being done by case officers [REDACTED] shows that a good reporter does not need a magical black box to get useful information. After all, too, the magical black box has to be placed; and who is there to do that except the agent?

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15. The problem is not to weigh covert and overt and clandestinely collected and overtly collected information against each other, but to evaluate properly all of what information the Clandestine Services get, [REDACTED] said. Often the covert and the overt are so mixed as to be impossible of separation.

16. The way DD(P) people arrange a tour in DD(I) is to apply to the appropriate panel. Arrangements there will be made. It is easier than you think, [REDACTED] told the class.

17. Doing too much too rapidly is true in some areas, [REDACTED] said in answering a request to comment on whether CIA may be taking on more intelligence and covert-action tasks than it can handle, with a resultant fuzziness in the focus of responsibility. To clarify fuzziness do not operate in situations that are not clear to you. The individual can clarify his own situation; the need is to exercise his own judgment. There is great danger in having to do more than you can.

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18. The advisability of speeding up POA granting by shifting tracing from CI Staff to division was denied by [REDACTED] Even though the present system takes time, it does make sense to have the job done by an independent group. Anyone is subjective about his own operation, and he does not like somebody's looking over his shoulder. But the basic security of the Agency is involved in an objective look. Certainly a sensitive operation on the verge of a flap needs to be talked over with another person. Checks and balances are the cure for near sightedness in one's own operations; there is protection in such checks.

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20. [REDACTED] answer about the collection of intelligence information in Washington was that CIA does not operate there because it has no such mission. The Department of State and the Federal Bureau of Investigation do operate in Washington.

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